

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously presented) A surgical needle, which comprises:

an elongated needle body defining a longitudinal y-axis along which the needle body extends and transverse x and z-axes, the needle body including a central shaft portion, a first suture end portion for attachment to a suture and a second needled end portion for penetrating tissue, the needled end portion having three sides which intersect to define three cutting edges and terminate at a needle point, each side including one sole pair of planar surface portions arranged in oblique relation to define a general concave appearance to each side, the needled end portion further defining an enlarged transition portion adjacent the central shaft section with at least an x-dimension greater than a corresponding x-dimension of the central shaft.

2. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the planar surface portions of each side are arranged to intersect along a median plane bisecting a respective side to define a substantially symmetrical concave appearance to the respective side.

3. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the enlarged transition portion defines a z- dimension greater than a corresponding z-dimension of the central shaft portion.

4. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 3 wherein the x-dimension and z-dimension correspond to the height and width respectively of the needle end portion.

5. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the planar surface portions of each side intersect to define an included angle ranging from about 160° to about 175°.

6. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 5 wherein the included angle is about 170°.

7. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein two of the cutting edges intersect at the needle point and define an angle of about 22° to about 25°.

8. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the central shaft portion defines a distal shaft transition portion adjacent the needled end portion, the distal shaft portion defining a cross-section of general triangular character.

9. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 8 wherein the distal shaft portion includes three planar surfaces interconnected by rounded surfaces.

10-11. (Previously canceled)

12. (Previously presented) A surgical needle, which comprises:

an elongated needle body defining a longitudinal y-axis along which the needle body extends and transverse x and z-axes, the needle body including a central shaft portion, a first suture end portion for attachment to a suture and a second needled end portion for penetrating tissue, the needled end portion having three sides which intersect to define three cutting edges and terminating at a needle point, each side including a pair of planar surface portions arranged in oblique relation and intersecting along a median plane bisecting a respective side to define a general concave appearance to the respective side, the needled end portion further defining an enlarged transition portion adjacent the central shaft section with an x-dimension at least substantially equal to a corresponding x-dimension of the central shaft.

13. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 12 wherein the enlarged transition portion defines the x- dimension which is greater than a corresponding x-dimension of the central shaft portion.

14. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 13 wherein the enlarged transition portion defines a z- dimension at least substantially equal to a corresponding z-dimension of the central shaft.

15. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 14 wherein the enlarged transition portion defines the z- dimension which is greater than a corresponding z-dimension of the central shaft portion.

16. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the x-dimension of the enlarged transition portion is defined between adjacent cutting edges.

17. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 16 wherein the z-dimension of the enlarged transition portion is defined between adjacent cutting edges.

18. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 15 wherein the x-dimension of the enlarged transition portion is defined between adjacent cutting edges.

19. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 18 wherein the z-dimension of the enlarged transition portion is defined between adjacent cutting edges.

20. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 15 wherein each side of the needle end portion includes a single pair of first and second planar surface portions arranged in oblique relation, the first and second planar portions being the pair of planar portions.

21. (Previously presented) The surgical needle according to claim 12 wherein each side of the needle end portion includes a single pair of first and second planar surface portions arranged in oblique relation, the first and second planar portions being the pair of planar portions.